

**First Class: Creating a Culture of Student Engagement and Success through a
New Student Experience Program for
Baton Rouge Community College, Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Student learning is central at Baton Rouge Community College, as evidenced by the mission and vision statements and the core values of the institution. The focus of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) titled First Class, is to improve student success by positively impacting student learning of the first year student.

The mission of the college states that 'Baton Rouge Community College identifies and meets the educational needs of its community through accessible, innovative, and dynamic programs. The college provides practical, well-rounded education that provokes thought, ignites creativity, spurs innovation, and strengthens our global community by improving the quality of life for its citizens." From this mission are drawn the core values of the institution. One of the stated values that the program is based upon includes enhancing, promoting and marketing programs that promote and improve completion and success rates for our students. The First Class program facilitates the college's efforts in demonstrating the mission, the vision and the core values in action. The Quality Enhancement Plan is an integral part of the strategic planning process, and is sustained with adequate resources including personnel, facilities, funding, and materials.

Baton Rouge Community College is committed to developing and implementing a first semester new student seminar that meets as a regular class with an assigned instructor. The purpose of this type of seminar is to orient the student to the institution and its programs and to teach important academic survival skills. The college designed and begun implementation of the First Class course, a freshman orientation course that engages students in the learning process and equips them with the requisite knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to be successful throughout their matriculation at the college.

Student success and the First Class program are directly linked to the mission of the college. The goals of the First Class program are threefold:

1. To integrate students into academic and social activities that will enhance their college experience;
2. To equip students with the skills to become self-reliant in the use of college and student support resources; and
3. To increase the retention and graduation rates of program participants at Baton Rouge Community College.

Each of the stated goals has identified specific and measurable learning outcomes that include attitudinal, behavioral and cognitive activities that help students adjust to the demands of the college environment. Each stated outcome related to the goals is measured through pre and post assessments, portfolio, survey data, and focus groups. The QEP staff works closely with the Institutional Research office of the college in establishing systematic success measures. As of the writing of this synopsis, the data for the two pilot courses scheduled for the spring 2009 semester is being compiled and analyzed. It is expected that the students who have participated in this course will have a successful college experience. Individuals interested in the forthcoming data may contact the QEP director named below.

For information on the development and implementation of the QEP, please contact:
Ms. Joanie D. Chavis, Dean for Learning Resources; (225) 216.8607 or chavisj@mybrcc.edu